

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for operating a virtual shopping mall by using a computer system, the computer system being established on a plurality of chain stores which is chained in advance to one another to form a physical distribution system, each of said chain stores including a terminal base unit for registering virtual goods information including an image, said terminal base units being connectable to the virtual shopping mall by a communication line, said method comprising:

registering virtual goods information, which corresponds to a seller's real goods, from one of said terminal base units provide in one of said chain stores to the virtual shopping mall after receiving said virtual goods information from said seller, said registering virtual goods information including capturing an the image of said real goods as a part of said virtual goods information;

intermediating business between said seller and a buyer on said virtual shopping mall by presenting said virtual goods information to the [[a]] buyer;

setting a delivery path on the physical distribution system for delivering said real goods form from said seller to said buyer in accordance with said buyer's selection of a terminal base from which said buyer receives said real goods; and

establishing trading between said buyer and said seller, which achieves business on said virtual shopping mall; and

~~presenting each of said images, which are included in said virtual goods information of a plurality of registered real goods, to said seller when said seller requests to modify said virtual goods information.~~

2. (Previously Presented) The method for operating a virtual shopping mall as claimed in claim 1, wherein said business is intermediated by presenting said image to said buyer.

3. (Previously Presented) The method for operating a virtual shopping mall as claimed in claim 2, further comprising:

selecting by said seller whether to modify said virtual goods information about real goods among a plurality of said real goods presented by said presenting.

4. (Previously Presented) The method for operating a virtual shopping mall as claimed in claim 3, wherein said presenting disposes each of said images by demagnifying said images and presents demagnified images to said seller.

5. (Previously Presented) The method for operating a virtual shopping mall as claimed in claim 2, wherein said trading includes said seller's setting said terminal base at least one of a plurality of real terminal bases to bring in said real goods.

6. (Previously Presented) The method for operating a virtual shopping mall as claimed in claim 2, further comprising:

instructing a physical distribution system, which includes a plurality of real terminal bases, to deliver said real goods.

7. (Previously Presented) The method for operating a virtual shopping mall as claimed in claim 2, wherein said business is intermediated by presenting said virtual goods information to said buyer as securing anonymity of said seller.

8. (Previously Presented) The method for operating a virtual shopping mall as claimed in claim 1, further comprising:

setting a maximum value of a number of categories of said virtual goods, which can be displayed on said virtual shopping mall, according to a fee charged to said seller.

9. (Previously Presented) The method for operating a virtual shopping mall as claimed in claim 1, further comprising:

updating a seller's database when said trading is established,
wherein the computer system stores a trade history for each of said sellers in said seller's database and setting a fee for said virtual shopping mall lower for sellers whose amount of past trades stored in said seller's database is large.

10. (Previously Presented) The method for operating a virtual shopping mall as claimed in claim 2, further comprising:

inspecting goods.

11. (Previously Presented) The method for operating a virtual shopping mall as claimed in claim 10, further comprising:

giving a penalty based on a predetermined penalty rule on said virtual shopping mall against said seller if said seller requests to register inappropriate virtual goods information.

12. (Original) The method for operating a virtual shopping mall as claimed in claim 11, wherein said predetermined penalty rule is established to give different penalties against said seller according to the number of registrations of said inappropriate virtual goods information.

13. (Previously Presented) The method for operating a virtual shopping mall as claimed in claim 2, further comprising:

forming a black list, which comprises a list of buyers who have failed to arrive to receive said real goods despite that a trade on said virtual shopping mall has been established.

14. (Currently Amended) A virtual shopping mall system, which is established by using a computer system, the computer system being established on a plurality of chain stores which is chained in advance to one another to form a physical distribution system, each of said chain stores including a terminal base unit for registering virtual goods information including an image, said terminal base units being connectable to the virtual shopping mall by a communication line, said virtual shopping mall system comprising:

a commercial goods managing database, which is provided to a seller and registers virtual goods information, from one of said terminal base units provided in one of said chain stores, corresponding to real goods of said seller including capturing an the image of said real goods as a part of said virtual goods information;

a delivery setting section, which achieves a trade on said virtual shopping mall by setting a delivery path, on the physical distribution system, for said real goods, from said seller to a buyer, from which said buyer receives said real goods, when a trade has been established between said seller and said buyer who is presented with said virtual goods information in said commercial goods managing database; and

~~an image presenting section for presenting each of said images, which are included in said virtual goods information of a plurality of registered real goods, to said seller when said seller requests to modify said virtual goods information.~~

15. (Previously Presented) The virtual shopping mall system as claimed in claim 14, further comprising:

a plurality of terminal base units, each of which is installed at a real terminal base, the plurality of real terminal bases forming a physical distribution system, said terminal base unit connecting and communicating with a virtual shopping mall operations apparatus that manages said commercial goods managing database.

16. (Original) The virtual shopping mall system as claimed in claim 15, further comprising:

a shop managing database, which sets up a virtual shop for selling said goods for each of said sellers on said computer system; and

a section for processing an owner registration procedure for sellers who want to open said virtual shop and be an owner thereof.

17. (Previously Presented) The virtual shopping mall system as claimed in claim 15, wherein each of said terminal base units functions as a place for a seller to bring real goods and for a buyer to receive said real goods, through communication of information with said virtual shopping mall operations apparatus.

18. (Previously Presented) The virtual shopping mall system as claimed in claim 15, further comprising:

a section for generating virtual goods information, which generates virtual goods information that corresponds to real goods of a seller who is an owner of a virtual shop.

19. (Previously Presented) The virtual shopping mall system as claimed in claim 18, wherein said section for generating virtual goods information comprises a media equipment device, which reads image data of real goods from a recording medium.

20. (Previously Presented) The virtual shopping mall system as claimed in claim 18, wherein said section for generating virtual goods information comprises an image capturing unit, which captures an image of real goods that are brought to said terminal base by said seller.

21. (Previously Presented) The virtual shopping mall system as claimed in claim 18, wherein said section for generating virtual goods information comprises a picture reading unit, which obtains image data of said real goods from a picture of said real goods brought in to said terminal base by said seller.

22. (Previously Presented) The virtual shopping mall system as claimed in claim 15, further comprising:

a section for managing, which manages information about leasing to a seller, or an owner of a virtual shop, and

an image capturing unit, which is used for generating virtual goods information that corresponds to real goods.

23. (Previously Presented) The virtual shopping mall system as claimed in claim 15, further comprising:

a catalog printing apparatus, which prints out a catalog of virtual goods information.

24. (Previously Presented) The virtual shopping mall system as claimed in claim 15, further comprising:

a section for searching, which searches virtual goods information managed by a virtual shopping mall operations apparatus.

25. (Currently Amended) A recording medium, which stores a program that can be read by a computer, wherein the program comprises a program to operate a virtual shopping mall, the program to operate a virtual shopping mall being established on a plurality of chain stores which is chained in advance to one another to form a physical distribution system, each of said chain stores including a terminal base unit for registering virtual goods information including an image, said terminal base units being connectable to the virtual shopping mall by a communication line, the program comprising:

instructions that cause a computer to register virtual goods information corresponding to real goods of a seller, from one of said terminal base units provided in one of said chain stores, to said virtual shopping mall by receiving said virtual goods information from said seller, said registering virtual goods information including capturing ~~an~~ the image of said real goods as a part of said virtual goods information;

instructions that cause a computer to intermediate business between said seller and a buyer on said virtual shopping mall by presenting said virtual goods information to said buyer;

instructions that cause a computer to achieve a trade on said virtual shopping mall by setting a delivery path on the physical distribution system of said real goods from said seller to said buyer, from which said buyer receives said real goods; and

~~instructions that cause a computer to present each of said images, which are included in said virtual goods information of a plurality of registered real goods, to said seller when said seller requests to modify said virtual goods information.~~

26. (Previously Presented) The method for operating a virtual shopping mall as claimed in claim 1, further comprising:
registering a seller for selling virtual goods; and
reserving a space for presenting said virtual goods upon said registration before registering said virtual goods information.

27. (Previously Presented) The method for operating a virtual shopping mall as claimed in claim 26, further comprising:

providing a plurality of units, each representing one of said virtual goods, into said space.

28. (Previously Presented) The method for operating a virtual shopping mall as claimed in claim 1, wherein the virtual shopping mall is operated by the computer system devoid of a seller opening a virtual shop.

29. (Previously Presented) The virtual shopping mall system according to claim 14, wherein the virtual shopping mall is operated by the computer system devoid of a seller opening a virtual shop.

30. (Previously Presented) The recording medium according to claim 25, wherein the virtual shopping mall is operated by the computer devoid of a seller opening a virtual shop.

31. (New) The method for operating a virtual shopping mall as claimed in claim 1, wherein said terminal base unit comprises an image capturing unit for capturing the image of said real goods as said virtual goods information.

32. (New) The virtual shopping mall system according to claim 14, wherein said terminal base unit comprises an image capturing unit for capturing the image of said real goods as said virtual goods information.

33. (New) The recording medium according to claim 25, wherein said terminal base unit comprises an image capturing unit for capturing the image of said real goods as said virtual goods information.